

MINUTES
TALBOT COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
4 May 2009

I. ROLL CALL

The regular monthly meeting of the Talbot County Historic Preservation Commission was called to order at 9:37 AM on Monday, 4 May 2009. Those members in attendance were Mr. Robert Arnouts, Acting Chair, Ms. Kathleen Kurtz, Mr. Eric Lowery, Ms. Kearby Parker and Mrs. Christine Dayton, who arrived after the hearing for the pier at Fairview. Ms. Peggy Pickall and Mrs. Polly Shannahan were not present. Representing the County were Mr. Martin Sokolich and Ms. Florence Ball. Also attending was Mr. Dean Dunaway, caretaker of Fairview.

II. NEW BUSINESS

- A. WORK PERMIT APPLICATION REVIEW: FLOATING PIER AT FAIRVIEW (T-60) – Before beginning this review, the following affirmation was read aloud by Acting Chair, Robert Arnouts:

“The qualifications of the members of this Commission and the staff to the Commission are on file with the Planning and Zoning Office and are hereby made a part of this application heard today. The guidelines and procedures adopted by the Commission are also made a part of this application. The application heard today is considered on its own merits and is not to be considered as establishing a precedent for any other application.”

Mr. Dean Dunaway, caretaker of Fairview, appeared before the Commission as representative for the owner, Franz Burda. The proposed pier was described as a floating pier on the MDE license and the description on the Historic District Work Permit Application. Mr. Arnouts asked Mr. Dunaway, “why a floating pier as opposed to a standard, permanent pier?” Mr. Dunaway explained that Mr. Burda only wants to have the pier available when his family is visiting, and that there will be permanent mooring piles to which the pier will be attached when in use. When not in use, the pier is to be stored in the shed. Mr. Robert Arnouts said he does not feel the pier has any impact on the historical features of the property. He then asked the other Commissioners if they had any questions or comments.

MOTION TO CLOSE: Since no one replied, Mr. Arnouts moved to close the hearing. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eric Lowery and carried.

MOTION TO APPROVE: Mrs. Kearby Parker moved to approve the pier as described in the application submittals. Ms. Kathleen Kurtz seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously by a quorum of four Commissioners.

- B. DISCUSSION OF CAMP SEMINAR – The seminar was held on 15 April 2009 as an activity of the Commissioner Assistance Mentorship Program (CAMP) which is sponsored by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions. Ms. Kathleen Kurtz said she thought it was an excellent session, and felt the other Commissions were “more vibrant” than TCHPC. She suggested that perhaps TCHPC should refocus on what it does. Mr. Robert Arnouts said TCHPC is a small entity compared to the others which have much larger numbers of historic properties, and have more funds with which to work. He added that in his opinion, guidelines for TCHPC need not be lengthy and laborious. Instead, the guidelines should make it easier for people to apply and offer some incentives to apply for HDOs. He suggested developing an inventory of prospective HDO properties and that it might be a good idea to create a brochure, stating the Commission’s mission and listing the advantages of having a property protected under an HDO. Mr. Eric Lowery suggested posting the brochure on the website as well. The possibility of having an exclusive TCHPC website was also discussed.

Mrs. Christine Dayton said she observed that many of the other commissions had more staff involvement. However, it was further discussed that those commissions were larger ones, with more funding and resources.

- C. SITE VISIT FOR MAY – Ms. Kathleen Kurtz announced that to date, she has not arranged a site visit for May. She said she would like to be able to eliminate site visits altogether since they consume so much time. Ms. Florence Ball reminded the Commissioners that site visits are a required activity in maintaining the integrity of the HDOs. Mr. Robert Arnouts suggested that in many cases, a drive-through inspection might suffice; and would make it possible to do several in the same day. A walking visit could then be arranged if the Commissioners see anything that might require closer inspection. Mrs. Kearby Parker suggested changing the letter to the property owners to tell them that they do not have to be present when the inspection is done. Mrs. Christine Dayton said she does not feel that would go over well, since most of the HDOs are exclusive, private properties and owners do not want people coming on their property when they are not at home.

The Commissioners discussed other ways to make the site visits less time consuming, such as going every two years instead of every year. It was also discussed that the Commission needs to find ways to make its meetings more productive and, at the same time, less time consuming. Mrs. Christine Dayton reminded the Commissioners that one way to shorten the meetings is to prepare ahead for discussions and reviews. She said the Commissioners are always provided with submittals well ahead of time, but often wait until a hearing to even look at them. Being more familiar with the topic and having a list of comments and questions ready would make the meeting flow more efficiently and effectively. Mrs. Kathleen Kurtz said maybe TCHPC needs to set goals and become more business-like. She added that she will

try to set up a site visit for this month if the rest of the Commission wants her to do so; however, there was no response about that from the other Commissioners.

III. CURRENT BUSINESS

- A. REVIEW OF 6 APRIL MINUTES – The minutes of the meeting on 6 April 2009 were read. Since there were no corrections or additions, *Mrs. Christine Dayton moved to approve the minutes as read. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kathleen Kurtz and unanimously carried.*
- B. DEMOLITION DELAY ORDINANCE – Mr. Martin Sokolich told the Commissioners the County Attorney said that before reviewing a draft of the proposed ordinance, he needs to know there is someone on the County Council willing to sponsor it. Mrs. Kearby Parker said Dirk Bartlett would be a good choice to ask, since he has a construction background and has been involved in historic preservation in the past. Mr. Robert Arnouts said he will fill Mr. Bartlett in on what TCHPC has been doing with the ordinance and provide him with a copy of the draft.
- C. 925 PORT STREET (T-347) – Mr. Martin Sokolich said Rick Towle is not opposed to an HDO; however while the Department of Parks and Recreation maintains the property, the County Council is the actual owner. He said Rick has a copy of Ward Bucher's report and is aware of what needs to be done in regard to repairs. He would like to know how much flexibility there is for the use of the interior. Mrs. Christine Dayton volunteered to complete the application for the Historic District Overlay (HDO)
- D. TCHPC BUDGET UPDATE – Mr. Martin Sokolich said the County Council has recommended cuts to the TCHPC budget amounting to approximately \$1,500.00. Most of that cut is reflected in the allowance for education. Some of the Commissioners asked why educational funds show as \$0.00 spent on the report when, in fact, there was money spent on education. Several Commissioners cited seminars that they attended over the past year for which they have not yet received reimbursement. Mr. Sokolich clarified that CLG funds were over and above TCHPC budget funds. Mr. Robert Arnouts said he has a problem with the educational requirement because there are not that many seminars available during the year, and when the few that are available are scheduled, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to find the time to attend them. Mrs. Kearby Parker reminded the group that participation in educational activities is one of the requirements for CLG qualification.

Mr. Eric Lowery asked Mr. Martin Sokolich whether it might be possible to increase the budget for advertising in order to cover the expense of brochures. Mrs. Kearby Parker said the funds budgeted for advertising have to be available for hearings that may need to be advertised in the newspaper. Ms. Florence Ball advised that according to the zoning ordinance, all

applicants with projects requiring public hearings are responsible to pay all advertising expenses. In response to Mr. Lowery's question, Mr. Sokolich said that the budget will most likely remain as it is.

- E. GUIDELINES – Mrs. Christine Dayton referred to email that was circulated among the Commissioners regarding St. Mary County's guidelines and her discussion with Richard Wagner who authored them. Mr. Wagner told her he felt it would be easy to write a set of guidelines for Talbot County, using St. Mary County's as a template. She also mentioned that Ms. Florence Ball had researched and recommended as a good example the guidelines that the town of Chestertown uses, and had talked to the town manager (Bill Ingersoll) who told her their Historic Commission wrote their own, and that TCHPC would be welcome to use them as a template, since they are not copyrighted.

Mr. Robert Arnouts said he feels TCHPC guidelines should be kept simple and easy for the public to understand. Mrs. Christine Dayton agreed, saying the guidelines should be kept basic and general, and provide definitions. Mr. Robert Arnouts said the first thing TCHPC needs to do is find someone who can put together a draft of the guidelines. Mrs. Christine Dayton said she will check with Richard Wagner to see what the cost might be to do that. Mr. Martin Sokolich said once TCHPC has an idea of cost, he will better be able to advise TCHPC of the appropriate procurement procedure and whether the job would need to be posted for bids.

- F. CURRENT HDO PROPERTIES – Mr. Martin Sokolich said as time allows, he and Ms. Florence Ball will begin surveying the HDO files one at a time to make sure all the official documentation regarding HDO boundaries and any other necessary information is in each file.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, 1 June 2009 at 9:30 am at the Bradley Room in the South Wing of the Courthouse.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:50 am.

6 May 2009